



THE EARLY INHABITANTS  
of  
SAN NICOLAS ISLAND.

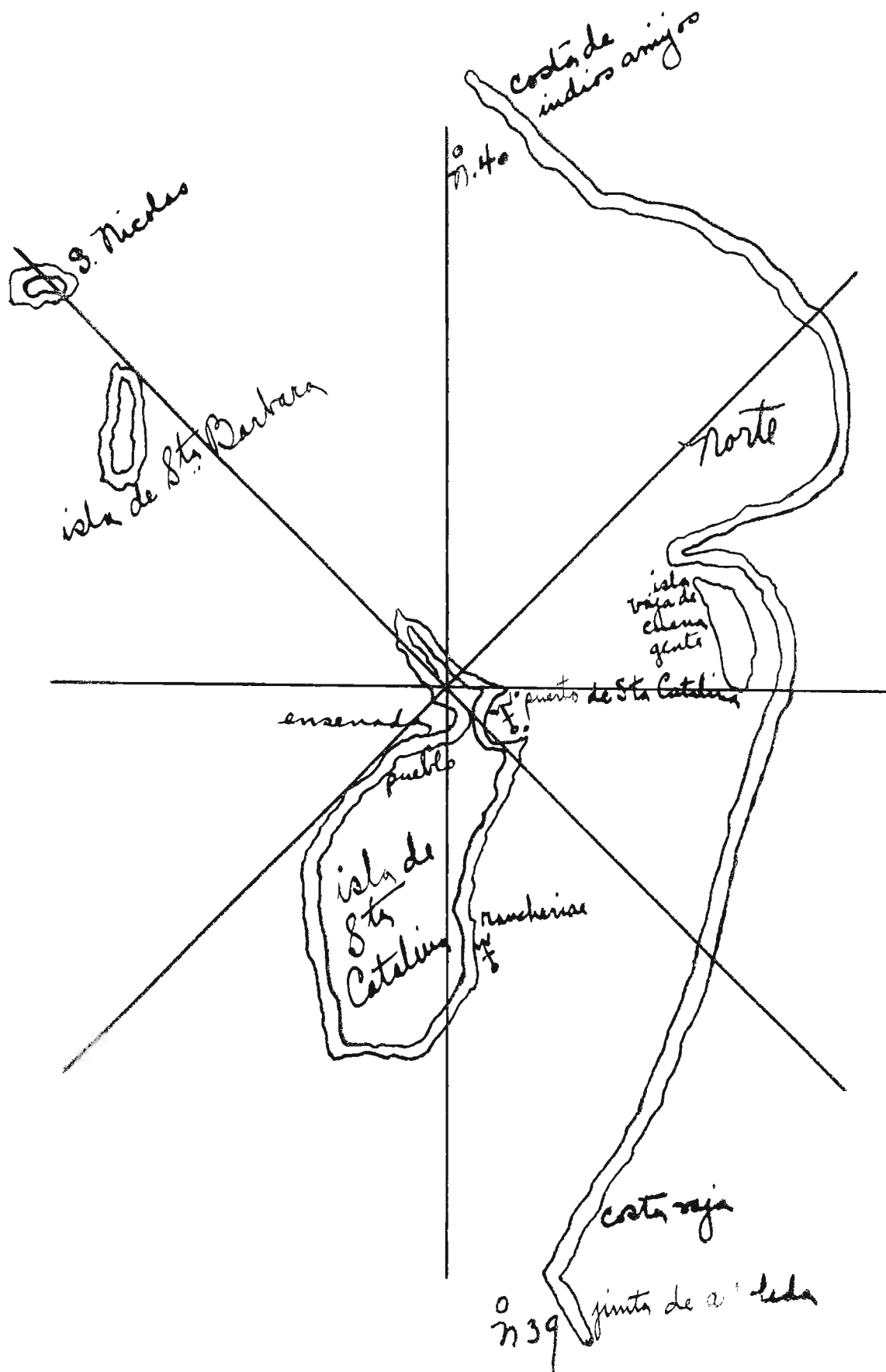
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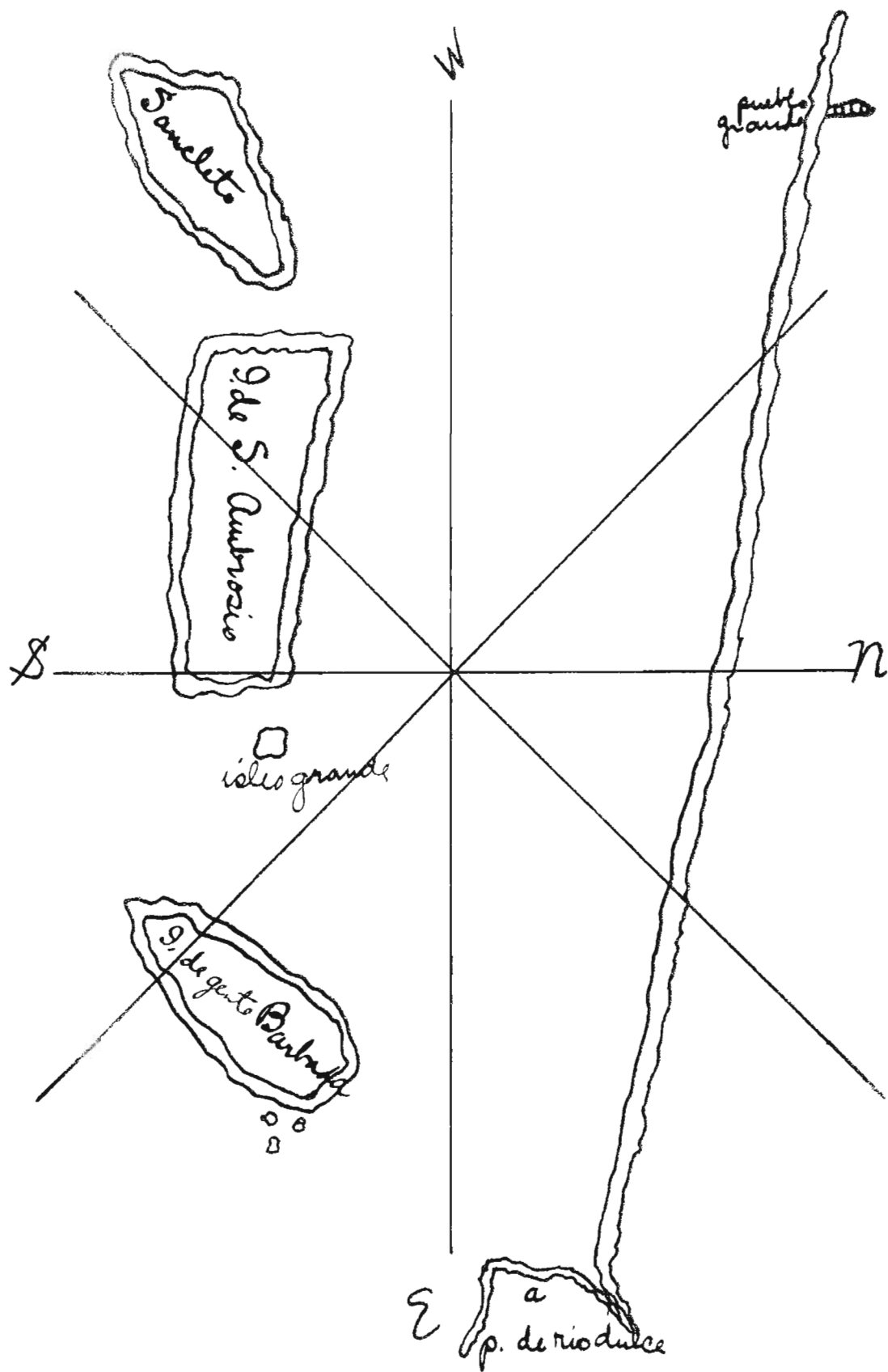
March 14th.1929.

One hundred miles west of San Pedro, wind swept, storm buffeted, desolate, and almost forgotten, lies an island, San Nicolas by name. Here it is said the wind continually sings a funeral dirge as if, by this means, to expiate the terrible crimes of the past. Nay, this wind is literally wiping the island from existence by blowing it into the sea. San Nicolas, deserted by all save a lone sheep herder, impossible of approach except in the most favorable weather, once supported a vast and contented population. Who were these people? Whence came they and whither have they gone? What of culture was theirs? It is to answer some of these questions that this paper was written. It is not claimed that there is anything original here, simply a collection from authentic sources of the answers to some of the above questions.

This island, as all others along this coast, lay undiscovered until the 16th or 17th century. In 1542 Cabrillo set out from Puerto de Navidad, Mexico, for a trip of exploration along the western coast. The two vessels used were smaller than any of our coastal vessels. They were poorly made, poorly manned. From his diary we copy the following:- "At day-break Saturday, the 7th of October, they were at the islands which they named, San Salvador (Santa Catalina) and La Vitoria (San Clemente). They anchored at one of them and went ashore with the boat to see if there were people; and when the boat came near, a great number of Indians emerged from the bushes and grass, shouting, dancing, and making signs that they should land. As they saw the women were fleeing from the boats they made signs that they should not be afraid. Immediately they were reassured, and laid down their bows and arrows on the ground and launched in the water a good canoe which held eight or ten Indians and came to the ships. They gave them beads and other articles, with which they were pleased, and then they returned. Afterward the Spaniards went ashore and they, the Indian women, and all felt very secure. Here an old Indian made signs to them that men like the Spaniards, clothed and bearded, were going about on the mainland. They remained on the island till mid-day." From here Cabrillo sailed to Santa Monica Bay and then on north to a point just above Golden Gate. They were then driven south to San Miguel, where they spent the winter and Cabrillo died. There is no evidence that Cabrillo saw San Nicolas. In fact, we must conclude that he stayed close to the coast and did not discover the farthest-out of these islands.

For sixty more years this island lay undiscovered and then Vizcaino made his famous voyage. This voyage was made by three vessels which set out from Acapulco, May 5, 1602. They sailed along the coast, encountering severe storms, becoming separated, explored Magdalena Bay, and finally in November reached San Diego Bay (only two of the vessels.) We quote from his diary as the voyage is continued:- "Thereupon, we continued our voyage, skirting along the coast until the 24th of the month (Nov.), which was the eve of the feast of the glorious Santa Catalina (St. Catherine) when we discovered three large islands. (In a foot note Bolton adds: The three islands shown on the Planos are the Santa Catalina, the Santa Barbara, and the San Nicolas, but we know that the San Clemente was also described.) We approached them with difficulty because of a head wind, and arrived at the middle one, which is more than twenty five leagues around. On the 27th of the month, and before casting anchor in a good cove (Santa Catalina) which was found, a multitude of Indians came out in canoes of cedar and





pine, made of planks very well joined and calked, each one with eight oars and with fourteen or fifteen Indians, who looked like galley slaves. They came along side without the slightest fear and came on board our ships, mooring their own. They showed great pleasure at seeing us, telling us by signs that we must land, and guiding us like pilots to the anchorage. The general received them kindly and gave them some presents, especially the boys. We anchored, and the admiral, Ensign Alarcon, Father Fray Antonio, and Captain Peguero, with some soldiers, went ashore. Many Indians were on the beach, and with the women treated us to roasted sardines and a small fruit like sweet potatoes. Fresh water was found, although a long distance from the beach. The next day the general and the Father Commissary went ashore, a hut was built, and mass was said. More than 150 Indian men and women were present, and they marvelled not a little at seeing the altar and the image of our Lord Jesus crucified, and listened attentively to the saying of mass, asking by signs what it was all about. They were told that it was about heaven, whereat they marvelled the more. When the divine services were at an end the general went to their houses, where the women took him inside, giving him some of the food which they had given him before. He brought to the ship six Indian girls from eight to ten years old, whom their mothers willingly gave him, and he clothed them with chemises, petticoats, and necklaces, and sent them ashore. The rest of the women, seeing this, came with their daughters in canoes, asking gifts. The result was that no one returned empty-handed. The people go dressed in seal skins, the women especially covering their loins, and their faces show them to be modest; but the men are thieves, for anything they saw unguarded they took. They are a people given to trade and traffic and are fond of barter, for in return for old clothes they would give the soldiers skins, shells, nets, thread, and very well twisted ropes, these in great quantities, and resembling linen. They have dogs like those in Castile.

-----On the night of the eve of San Andres, the 29th of said month, we set sail, for the Indians had told us by signs that farther along on this same island they had their houses and there was food. (Footnote:- On November 29, the San Diego being at anchor at Catalina Island in 34½ degrees, a junta was held to consider the circumnavigating of the island and exploring the San Andres (San Clemente). It was decided not to spend the time, but to go ahead, leaving these explorations for the return, since the weather was good, the men were becoming ill, and the supplies becoming short. The general therefore ordered the pilots to set sail as soon as possible.) On the day of San Andres, at four o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived at the place which the Indians had designated, they piloting us in their canoes into port (Catalina), which is all that could be desired as to convenience and security. On the beach there was a pueblo and more than three hundred Indians, men, women, and children. The general and Ensign Alarcon went ashore and inspected it. The Indian men and women embraced him and took him into their houses. These women have good features. The general gave them beads and regaled them, and they gave him prickley pears and a grain like the gofio of the Canary Islands, in willow baskets very well made, and water in vessels resembling flasks, which were like rattan inside and very thickly varnished outside. They had acorns and some very large skins, apparently of bears, with heavy fur, which they used for blankets.

The general went inland to see the opposite coast. He found on the way a level prairie, very well cleared, where the Indians were assembled to worship an idol which was there. It resembled a demon, having two horns, no head, a dog at its feet, and many children painted all around it. The Indians told the General not to go near it, but he approached it and saw the whole thing, and made a cross, and placed the name of Jesus on the head of the demon, telling them that that was good, and from heaven, but that the idol was the devil. At this the Indians marvelled, and they will readily renounce it and receive our Holy Faith, for apparently they have good intellects and are friendly and desirous of our friendship. The general returned to the pueblo, and an Indian woman brought him two pieces of figured China silk, in fragments, telling him that they had gotten them from people like ourselves, who had negroes; that they had come on the ship which was driven by a strong wind to the coast and wrecked, and that it was farther on. The general endeavored to take two or three Indians with him, that they might tell him where the ship was lost, promising to give them clothes. The Indians consented, and went with him to the captain's ship, but as we were weighing anchor preparatory to leaving, the Indians said they wished to go ahead in their canoe, and they did not wish to go aboard the ship, fearing that we would abduct them, and the general, in order not to excite them, said; "Very well."

We set sail, and on leaving the port a head-wind struck us, which prevented our going where the Indians indicated; therefore we stood out to sea and the Indians returned to their pueblo. This attempt was given up because we did not have the launch, which had gone to reconnoitre another Island (probably Santa Man's Island) apparently belonging to the mainland, and because the admiral's ship was absent, as it could not make the said port, and because the fog was so dense we could not see each other, and also because there seemed to be so many islands, keys and shoals, among which, in such weather, the pilots did not dare take the flagship; and so we continued our voyage.

The next day the admiral's ship and frigate came up with us, for perhaps God willed it that we should be united. On being asked what he had found on the island, Ensign Melendez said that there were many Indians, who had told him by signs that upon it there were men who were bearded and clothed like ourselves. Thinking them to be Spaniards, he sent them a note, and eight Indians came to him in a canoe, bearded and clothed in skins of animals, but they could learn nothing more. Accordingly the general ordered that we should continue our voyage without further delay, because our men were all becoming ill, leaving for the return any efforts to verify what the Indians of the Island Santa Catalina had told us by signs, for, as we could not understand their language, all was confusion and there was little certainty as to what they said."

We are uncertain whether Vizcaino was actually on the Island of San Nicolas or not. However, because there were three vessels in this exploration party, because the Island is placed on the map in somewhere near its correct position and given a fairly true shape, we are safe in concluding that either Vizcaino or some of his party were actually on the Island, and that the description of the Indians may have been of those on San Nicolas as well as those on other Islands.

Again the curtain goes down and we have no definite information of visits to San Nicolas until the nineteenth century. It is true, the Capt. Gaspar de Portola was in the Santa Barbara Channel in 1769 with 65 men and Father Juan Crespi and Father Francisco Gomez. This expedition was interested chiefly in the settlement of the coast and so far as recorded did not visit any of the Islands in the Channel.

The early nineteenth century saw much activity on this coast. The New England traders were beginning to find their way as far north as Alaska. The Russians were doing their best to strengthen their foothold in the northwest. England was attempting to secure some of the fur trade which was proving very lucrative. However it seems that the New Englanders were the successful contenders for this trade with the Russians. They entered into an agreement with the Russian American Fur Co. whereby they, the New Englanders, would take the hides obtained from the Russians to China and bring back what was needed by the Russians. The Russians agreed to furnish Indians to hunt. These Indians lived for the most part on the flesh of the animals killed, so the expense of securing the hides was very small. The Indians were brought to the Channel Islands where they hunted sea otters and waged a war on the almost defenceless natives. This continued for years, the lot of the natives becoming continually more difficult. The following story taken from Hutchings California Magazine of Nov. 1856 illustrates what was taking place on the Islands:- "In the year 1811 a ship owned by Boardman and Pope of Boston, commanded by Capt. Whittamore, trading on this coast, took from the port of Sitka, Russian America, about thirty Kodiak Indians, a part of a hardy tribe inhabiting the Island of Kodiak, to the Islands of Santa Barbara Channel, for the purpose of killing the sea otters, which were very numerous in the neighborhood of these islands. Capt. Whittamore, after landing the Kodiaks on the Island and placing in their hands fire arms and the necessary implements of the chase, sailed away to South America. In the absence of the ship, a dispute arose between the Kodiaks and the natives of the Islands, originating in the seizure of the females by the Kodiaks. The Kodiaks, possessing more activity, endurance and knowledge of the war, and possessing superior weapons, slaughtered the males without mercy, old and young. On the Island of San Nicolas, not a male, old or young, was spared. At the end of a year Capt. Whittamore returned, took the Kodiaks on board, and carried them back to Alaska."

It is doubtful if this story is correct in detail. However, it demonstrates clearly what was going on among the islands. Not only was this hunting of sea otter and the Indian women making the lot of the natives more difficult, but the development of the missions was having its effect on them as well. There had been a well-developed trade between the islands and the mainland. Articles needed were brought from the mainland and bartered for goods possessed by the islanders. As the Indians of the mainland were gathered into the missions they no longer had the opportunity of making these trips to the islands. Thus it was that the lot of the island Indians became more and more intolerable.

About the year 1832 we find that the Fathers of the Mission Santa Barbara ordered the removal of the Indians of San Nicolas to the mainland that their (the Indians') lot might be improved. They secured a Capt. Sparks, an otter hunter and well-acquainted with the islands, to

make the trip. The Indians were rounded up and taken on board. All was well, and they were about to sail when one woman discovered that her child had been left behind. How this could have happened is hard to understand. She returned to hunt for the child. There are many stories of the events just prior to and after her return to the island. Some state the woman protested that she must return to find her child and, not making herself understood and realizing that the anchor was being raised and the boat about to sail away, she threw herself overboard and swam to the shore. This may have angered Capt. Sparks causing him to deliberately sail away and leave the woman on the island. Or it may be that Capt. Sparks was forced, because of a storm, to leave San Nicolas. Be the reason for his leaving what it may, the fact remains that he left without the woman. He may have expected to return, but upon reaching Santa Barbara and discharging the islanders he was ordered to San Francisco with a cargo of lumber. On his return voyage the vessel ran into a storm and was lost. This was the only vessel on the coast, so it was impossible to return for the woman left on San Nicolas Island. Years drifted by. Now and then the Fathers of the Mission of Santa Barbara would ask a hunter if they had seen any signs of human life on San Nicolas. The reply was always in the negative; more years rolled by, until the story became almost a myth. About the year 1850 we find a man named George Nidever had come into prominence in Santa Barbara. He was an adventurer, scout, hunter, and courageous pioneer, born in Tennessee, making his way west to finally locate in Santa Barbara. Nidever owned a boat, which he had purchased in San Francisco and in which he made frequent hunting and exploring trips to the various Channel Islands. Furs of sea otters and eggs of sea gulls were fairly numerous and much in demand. I was unable to determine just to what use the latter were put, but believe they were a part of the trade with China. The Mission Fathers asked Nidever, while he was on these hunting trips, to look for the woman who had been left on San Nicolas. In 1852, while hunting on the island, he discovered foot prints in the soft ground near a spring. He found also some enclosures made of whale bones, but these had not been occupied for a long time, so that grass was grown high within them. Night came on and he returned to his ship. A "north wester" came up the next day and he was forced to give up any farther search and leave the island. Late this same year we find Nidever making another trip to San Nicolas. On the trip he found more evidences of the existence of a human being. Among these is a basket placed in the crotch of a tree. This was found, upon examination, to contain bone needles, several skins of shag, and a sinew rope. His first thought was to replace these in the basket and return all to the place where they had been found. On further consideration he decided to scatter the contents of the basket about on the ground, reasoning that if the woman was still on the island she would gather these things together in the basket and return the basket and its contents to the crotch of the tree. They could find nothing more on this trip, and a few days later were driven off by another storm.

The latter part of July, 1853, he again fitted out for a hunt on San Nicolas. I want now to quote from an original manuscript found in the Bancroft Library at Berkeley, as Nidever describes what took place:-  
"Ten days after our return I again fitted out for a thorough hunt among the Islands and principally around San Nicolas. Charley Brown accompanied me as hunter; an Irishman, whom we called Colorado, from his florid complexion,



with three Mission Indians manned our boat, while a fourth Mission Indian acted as cook. We reached the San Nicolas early in the day and at once went ashore for the purpose of selecting a camping place, as we intended to make a stay of at least two or three months. We landed about the middle of the Island on the N. W. side and went up towards the head of the Island. A high rocky bank ran along the edge of the water, its base for the most part being washed by the sea. A few short stretches of sandy beach occurred here and there, but they were not always accessible from the bank. About  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the head of the Island we found a good spring of water just above the edge of the beach, and in the wet soil surrounding it more foot prints, that must have been made but a short time before. As it was already late and we were some 6 or 7 miles from the schooner, we were obliged to return without farther search, determining, however, to make a thorough exploration of the Island on the following day. Accordingly, the next morning early, as soon as we had breakfast, all hands but the cook went on shore, at the same place we had landed the day before. Having on our previous visits seen most of the latest signs near the head of the Island and, besides, there being but few springs in the middle and lower portions of the Island, we decided to search first from the middle up towards the head. The three men struck across the low, sandy stretch before mentioned and found the basket and its contents carefully replaced in the crotch of the bush in which we had first discovered it. Charley and I struck up towards the head of the Island. Having become tired, I sat down to rest and Charley continued around the head of the Island. Reaching the place where he had seen the foot prints the day before, he followed up the ridge. Near its top he found several huts made of whale's ribs and covered with brush, although it was so long since they had been occupied that they were open on all sides and the grass was quite high within. Looking about in all directions from this point, he discovered at a distance along the ridge a small black object about the size of a crow, which appeared to be in motion. Advancing cautiously towards it, he soon discovered it to be the Indian woman, her head and shoulders only visible above one of a small enclosure resembling those we had discovered. He approached as near as he dared and then, raising his hat on his ramrod, signaled to the men who were recrossing the low, sandy stretch and were plainly visible from this point. They saw the signals and came towards him. In the meantime the old woman was busily employed in stripping blubber from a piece of seal skin, which she held across one knee, using, in the operation, a rude knife made of a piece of iron hoop stuck into a piece of rough wood for a handle. She kept up a continual jabbering to herself and every few moments would stop and look in the direction of our men, whom she had evidently been watching, her hand placed over her eyes to shade them from the sun.

Upon his approach, there were some dogs near, which began to growl. These the old woman sent away with a yell, but without looking in the direction of Charley. The men having come up, they quietly surrounded her to prevent any attempt to escape. This being done, Charley stepped around in front of her, when, instead of showing any alarm, she smiled and bowed, chattering away in a language wholly unintelligible to all of them, even to the Indians. They seated themselves around her, after having made signs to me to come up. I at first did not care to go to where they were, as I supposed that they had simply discovered something that excited their curiosity and I would hear about it when they should come down. They continued to make signs to me to come there, however, so I went up and found

them seated around the old woman. She smiled and bowed to me also, and, having taken a seat, she took some roots of two different kinds, one called carcomites, and the name of the other I do not know, and placed them in the fire which was burning in the enclosure. As soon as they were roasted she invited us all to eat some. The site of the enclosure or hut where we found her was on the N. W. side and near the top of the ridge that forms the upper end of the Island. It was not far from the best spring of water, near the best point for fish and seal, and it commanded a good view of the greater portion of the Island. Just outside the enclosure or wind break, as I should call it, was a large pile of ashes and another of bones, showing that this had been her abode for a long time. Nearby were several stakes with blubber on them, as we had seen around the other enclosures. There was blubber also hanging on a sinew rope, similar to the one already described, which was stretched between two stakes. Near the enclosure were several baskets, some in the process of construction, also two bottle-shaped vessels for holding water; these, as well as the baskets being woven, were of some species of grass very common on the Island. There were also several other articles, as fish hooks made of bone, and needles of the same material, lines or cords of sinews for fishing and larger ropes of sinews she no doubt used for snaring seals on the rocks, where they came to sleep. The old woman was of medium height but rather thick. She must have been about 50 years old, but she was still strong and active. Her face was pleasing, as she was continually smiling. Her teeth were entire, but worn to the gums, the effect, no doubt, of eating the dried seal blubber. Her head, which had evidently been for years without any protection, was covered with thick, matted hair. This was once black, no doubt, but now it had become of a dull brown color. Her clothing consisted of but a single garment of the skins of shag, made in the form of a gown. It fitted close at the neck, had no sleeves, was girded at the waist with a sinew cord, and reached nearly to her feet. She had another dress of the same material used in making one of these baskets. These were sewed together with sinews, the needles being of bone. This place was undoubtedly where she usually lived, but in the rainy season she lived in a cave nearby.

Having been requested by the Fathers of the Mission of Santa Barbara to bring her off in case we found her, I asked the Indians if they thought she could be taken by force if necessary. They thought she could. Charley Brown was of the opinion that no force would be necessary in taking her. I therefore made signs to her to go with us, but she stared at me, seemingly without comprehending what was wanted. Charley then placed his hand on her shoulder to call her attention and then went through the motions of putting her things into baskets and then these on his back, at the conclusion of which he said:- "Vamoose". This she understood without any difficulty, for she at once began putting her things into her baskets. Her basket filled, she put it on her back and followed the Indians toward the beach, while we walked behind, each one of us carrying some of her things. Seal meat, some of it stinking, and a seal's head from which the putrified brains were running, were all carefully put into the basket. We soon arrived at a spring of water, where we stopped, and on some stakes which we found standing near we hung the things we were carrying, fixing them on the stakes in such a manner as to make her believe we took very great care of them. Near

this spring there were several rocks, in the cracks of which were large numbers of fish and other bones carefully placed. We then proceeded to the beach where a spring issues from a shelving rock just below the bank. The old woman stopped here to wash, the men having gone on ahead, and Charley and I remained on the bank above. This being finished, we proceeded to the boat and went on board the schooner. When we put her into the boat she crept forward to the bow, where she knelt, holding firmly onto each side of the boat. As soon as we got on board she crept alongside of the stove which was on deck. Dinner was ready and was at once served. The cook gave the old woman some pork and hard tack, which she seemed to relish, and in fact she took readily to all of our food, it always agreeing with her. Charley Brown at once set to work and made her a petticoat of ticking, which, with a man's cotton shirt and a black necktie, completed her dress, and she seemed to be very proud of it. Seeing Charley at work on her petticoat, she made signs that she wanted to sew. According, she was given a needle and thread, but Charley was obliged to thread it for her, as her eyes seemed weak. I had given her an old cloak or cape that was almost in ribbons and she sewed up all the rents and holes. Her manner of sewing was peculiar; placing her work across her knee, she thrust the needle through the cloth with the right hand and pulled the thread through with the left.

The next day we went ashore and camped, about the middle of the Island close to the beach. We made a temporary shelter by spreading a sail over two oars driven into the side of the bank. A similar shelter was made for her of brush. We remained here hunting about a month, when we brought her on shore with us. While on the Island with us she busied herself in going for wood and water about a quarter of a mile distance and working on her baskets. She brought water and wood of her own accord, the water in the vessels before mentioned. Of the several baskets she was working, not one of them was completed, although she would work first on one and then on the other. One day Charley shot a she-otter off shore. It was brought to land for the purpose of skinning. Inside of her was a young otter, within a few days of being born. The carcass was being hauled down to the water as was customary after taking off the skin, when the old woman vigorously protested against such a waste of meat. Seizing one of the flippers, she drew it back on land, where it lay until the stench obliged us to throw it into the water. By this time however she had come to the conclusion that our food was better than this, and she so expressed herself in her own rude way by signs. She was very fond of sugar and, in fact, anything sweet, and showed her fondness for it by smacking her lips. She had evidently known hunger, as she sedulously saved every scrap of food and bones, and the latter she would take out from time to time, suck them over and over, and put them away again. When we took her from her hut she was very careful to place the seal's head in the basket, although it was almost rotten. The young otter was skinned and stuffed, making a plaything for the old woman. She hung it by a string from the roof of her shelter and for hours at a time would amuse herself like a child in making it swing back and forth, striking it with her hand to keep it in motion. One day while out hunting I came across her lining one of the vessels she used for holding water. She had built a fire and had several small stones about the size of a walnut heating in it. Taking one of the vessels which was in shape and size very like a demijohn, excepting that the neck and mouth were much larger, she dropped a few pieces of asphaltum with it, and as soon as the stones were well heated they were dropped in on top of the asphaltum.

They soon melted it, when, resting the bottom of the vessel on the ground, she gave it a rotary motion with both hands until its interior was completely covered with asphaltum. These vessels hold water well, and if kept full may be placed with safety in a hot sun.

When we left the Island for Santa Barbara we were caught in such a violent gale that we were several times on the point of turning back, but we finally got under the lee of Santa Cruz Island which afforded us some shelter until late in the day when the wind went down. As soon as it began to blow, the old woman conveyed to us by signs her intention to stop the wind. She then knelt and prayed, facing the quarter from which the wind blew, and continued to pray at intervals during the day until the gale was over. Then she looked at us and smiled, as much as to say: "You see how I have succeeded in stopping the wind!" From Santa Cruz we ran over to Santa Barbara, arriving there early the next day. Upon nearing the shore an oxcart came in sight, when the old woman's delight was unbounded. She clapped her hands and danced, pointing the while at the cart and oxen. On landing, I found my sons at the beach awaiting my arrival, one of them being on horseback. Her delight at the sight of the horse was even greater than that manifested at the sight of the oxcart. As soon as she got out of the boat she went up to it and began examining it, pointing at this part, then that, and talking and laughing to herself. Finally she pointed at the horse, and placing two fingers of her right hand astride the forefinger of her left she imitated the motion of a horse. The news was not long in spreading of the arrival of the old woman, and we had hardly reached my house with her when half the town came down to see her. For months after, she and her things, as her dress, baskets, needle, etc., were visited by everybody in the town and for miles around outside of it.

The old woman was always in good humor and sang and danced to the great delight of the children and even older ones. She often visited the town and seldom returned without some present. The vessels that touched here usually brought passengers, who, hearing of her, came to my house. The captain of the Fremont, one of these vessels, offered to take her to San Francisco and exhibit her, giving me one-half of what he could make. Capt. Trussel of this place offered me \$1000 for her for the same purpose. We had all become somewhat attached to her, however, and consequently refused to listen to these proposals. The same day we arrived here the Fathers from the Mission came down to see her. They continued to visit her and also sent for Indians from different parts of this section and speaking different Indian tongues, in hopes of finding someone who could converse with her. Several came, each representing a different dialect, but none of them could understand her or make themselves understood. She was continually talking and frequently made use of the word "pickinny" in referring to her child. She also used "Manana". She expressed a great many ideas by signs so plainly that we readily understood them. By signs she told us that she did not find her child, that she wandered about for days without taking hardly any food or drink, sometimes sleeping but little, until her clothes were torn and her feet and legs bleeding. After a time she forgot her child and sang and danced. She also told that she was very sick at one time; that she had seen vessels passing to and fro but none came to take her off; that

she saw us on the Island before we found her.

Her dresses, bone needles, and other curiosities were taken possession of by Father Gonzales, with my consent, and sent to Rome. About five ~~weeks~~<sup>months</sup> after she was brought over she was taken sick from eating too much fruit, seven ~~weeks~~<sup>months</sup> from the day of her arrival died. The Fathers of the Mission baptized her "sub conditione" and named her Juana Maria. I left here for San Francisco just before she died, having first made her a rough coffin. My wife can tell you better about her after I brought her ashore.

In his book on the Channel Islands Holder gives Charley Brown's account of the finding of this woman. He visited Brown with a stenographer and secured Brown's version of the successful search for the lost woman. Brown's story checks with Nidever's very closely.

Englehardt in his book "The Santa Barbara Mission" refers to this story. He stated that he was unable to find any record of the baptism of Juana Maria or of her burial. The grave is unknown and unmarked today.

Thus perished the last of the early inhabitants of San Nicolas Island. In fact I believe you will agree with me that it would be correct to say the last inhabitant of San Nicolas Island, for the lone sheep herder of the island can hardly be called an inhabitant.

These early inhabitants of the Island belonged to the Shoshone tribe. Kroeber states that only four badly-spelled words have been preserved from their language but that these are sufficient to prove the above statement. This island is a difficult one to reach even today, so its isolation would tend to develop a different language and culture.

The tribe buried its dead in rather shallow graves. These are constantly being exposed to view by the shifting sands. When dug up the skeletons show, for the most part, that before burial the knees had been flexed and brought up to the chin, and the arms folded around in front of the knees. With the dead were buried his possessions. The visitor to the island today thus hunts for these graves in order to find the artifacts of this lost race.

They were fishermen rather than hunters. Very few arrows are found on the island. Fish hooks made of abalone shell are not uncommon. Numerous implements made of bone are also found. These include needles, awls, and other devices the use of which is uncertain. Mortars and pestles are common and of great variation in size. These are made of sandstone. There are other stone artifacts which may have been used as sinkers, ornaments, or ceremonial devices. Beads are numerous in the graves. These are made of shells. They used either the whole shell or cut the abalone shells into the desired size and shape. Their homes were made of frame work of whalebone and covered with hides or brush. Whales were numerous about the island and were frequently washed ashore. The unusual number of sea otters existing near the island has been referred to frequently in this paper. These furnished a source of food and hides as well.

Baskets were woven and covered on the inside with asphaltum. The asphaltum was common on the coast of the island as well as the mainland then as now. One of these baskets was in the museum of the California Academy of Science in San Francisco until 1906, when it was destroyed by the fire following the earthquake of that year. This is described as flasket shaped and so thickly covered with asphaltum that the reeds were scarcely visible. The Indians used asphaltum to close the small holes in the abalone shells, thus giving them another small dish for numerous uses. They had canoes and traded with the Indians of the coast and Catalina. From the latter place they secured the steatite used for small ornaments and charms.

To summarize: The Island was discovered by Viscaino in 1602.

At that time it supported a large population. They possessed large canoes, existed by fishing, were unwarlike, traded with the coast and Catalina.

They were partially exterminated by the Indians of the northwest who were brought to the Island to hunt sea otters.

They were removed in 1835 to the Mission of Santa Barbara, with the exception of one woman.

This woman was found and removed to Santa Barbara twenty years later by George Nidever.

The artifacts found on the island prove that they were fishermen.

It is astonishing that we should find the stone age persisting until such a recent date right here on our own shores.

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